



The Croydon Chronicle

Winter 2014

Letter from the Supervisor

Lately, just as we are about to close the Nature Center for the day, a spunky little fox jogs up the sidewalk, makes one lap around the building and then trots off into the woods in search of its supper. She is a gorgeous creature with a fluffy coat the color of caramel and such delicate paws that she looks like she's barely touching the ground when she walks. I'm thankful that we have animal visitors like our fox who remind me to slow down and take a few moments to appreciate nature.

Everyone is so busy these days (myself included) that we rush from one activity to the next and rarely pause to just look around. Winter is a great time to take a few minutes and peer out your window or, better yet, get outdoors and just observe the world around you. In the winter, I like to track which birds visit our feeders (Titmice, Cardinals and the other usual suspects) or which mammals have been

active near the Center at night (skunks and deer mostly) and then, as we get closer to spring, I make an effort to note when early spring flowers bloom. It's a great way to unwind and I find that even a few minutes outside makes me a happier person. Not surprisingly, this is supported by research that says spending time outdoors can improve mood, reduce stress and increase one's ability to concentrate.

So, if you are looking to spend some time in nature this season, CCNC has some great programs to get you outdoors. Our naturalists have come up with some exciting and innovative ideas for this winter like our **Family Camp Day** where you can experience the winter version of our camp activities. If you're interested in exploring some hands-on science stations with your little one, then our **Sunday Science Sampler** is for you. Or if your child is looking for an evening of campfire fun

there is our **Nature Center Night Out**.

Winter is the time to plan for the summer too, and we've been busy creating our 2014 summer camp schedule. There are some old favorites like **Guppy Nature Camp** and **Nature Explorations** as well as some fresh new options like **Outdoor Expeditions** and **American Indian Crafts and Culture**. We are also partnering with Rockville Science Center to offer some exciting earth science camps. Registration for summer camps begins on January 21, 2014.

We hope to see you at Croydon Creek Nature Center this season. Enjoy your winter!

Elissa Totin
Supervisor

Croydon Creek Nature Center

852 Avery Rd, Rockville, MD, 20851

Phone

240-314-8770

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www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek

E-mail

ccnc@rockvillemd.gov

Hours of Operation

Tuesday through Saturday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

Closed Mondays

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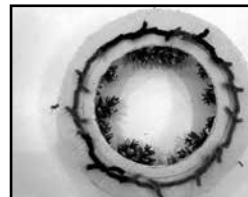
Kids Corner

Kids Activity - Pinecone Wreath

Supplies:

- 12-15 pinecones
- Cardboard
- Pipe cleaners cut in half, one piece for each pinecone
- Scissors
- Dinner plate and salad plate
- Optional – paint, ribbon, glitter, for decorating

Instructions:



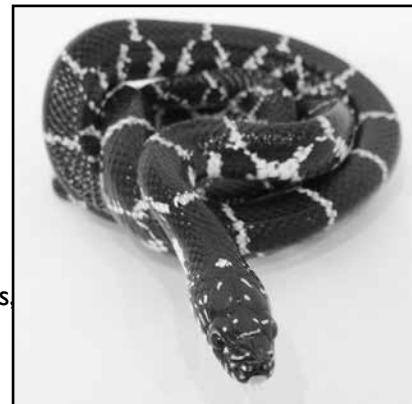
1. Take a walk and gather your pinecones. Brush off pine needles and dirt. Make sure they are dry and insect-free before bringing them inside.
2. To make the wreath base, draw a large circle on the sheet of cardboard with a large dinner plate. Make a smaller circle inside the larger one with a salad plate. Cut the larger circle from the cardboard and then the smaller circle from the larger one so that you've made a ring. You should have a piece of cardboard the shape of a wreath.
3. If desired, paint or color the wreath base and let it dry.
4. Poke holes around the wreath base, about 1.5-2 inches apart.
5. Wrap a pipe cleaner around the base of the first pinecone, and twist the ends together once, leaving plenty of slack. Slide the ends through the first hole in the wreath base. In the same manner, add a second pinecone next to the first.
6. If you turn over the wreath you should have two sets of pipe cleaners. Twist the pipe cleaner ends of the first and second cones together to secure them to the ring.
7. Continue this process until the whole wreath is covered with pine cones and they are all secured.
8. Add a bow, glitter, or any additional ornamentation you can think of, and hang it up!



Animal Update

In the summer, CCNC lost its oldest animal, Elroy the corn snake. Elroy was hatched at the National Zoo in 1989 and then lived a variety of places before coming to CCNC in 2002. Given the average lifespan of a corn snake is about 15 years, Elroy certainly lived a nice long life. We miss having him around.

In September, CCNC welcomed a new member to our animal family, Louie, the Eastern Kingsnake. He came to us from a reptile rescue in Northern Virginia and we are very excited to have him. He is about a year old and still small – only about 12 inches long. Kingsnakes can grow to be about 6 feet long, so he has lots of growing to do. Kingsnakes got their name by the food that they eat. In the wild they eat other snakes, turtles, rodents, birds and eggs. Kingsnakes are immune to venom, so they are even able to eat venomous snakes! Next time you are at the Nature Center be sure to check out Louie!



Urban Forests: Coexisting With Wildlife

By Cristina Alves, Naturalist

I glance through the office window at the Croydon Creek Nature Center (CCNC) and see a flock of Carolina chickadees, tufted titmice and goldfinches dancing among the dried coneflowers. From the same window, I also see a downy woodpecker, two robins and at least a half a dozen mourning doves and sparrows nearby the birdbath. The vision is both cheerful and peaceful. I know that the native plants and water we provide, along with the fact that we are near the Hayes Forest Preserve help with the bird species diversity I can see now. Still, it is surprising to me that such an environment exists only about 2 miles away from the busy Rockville Town Center.

The 120 acres of the Hayes Preserve, where CCNC is nestled, are connected to Montgomery County's Rock Creek Park. Protected areas like the Hayes Preserve, Rock Creek Park along with all other county and city parks and the collection of trees, plants and wildlife in yards and medians constitute what we call urban forests. They are a critical part of the green infrastructure that makes up a city ecosystem and provide immense environmental, societal and economic benefits to the city residents and future generations.

Urban forest trees filter ground water, slow storm-water runoff, keep soil from eroding and alleviate flooding. They clean the air, offset the heat generated by development, decrease noise, energy needs and pollution, besides providing wildlife habitat. Urban forests also affect the social environment that influences urban quality of life.

The forests we see today in urban centers, however, are very different from what the Europeans first settled. What they found at that time was a forest with a dense canopy of huge

trees and wildlife that included elk, woodland bison, mountain lion and bobcat. Over the next 300 years, as our population grew, we cleared the land of trees to support industry, agriculture and enormous urban development. In Montgomery County, the forest cover in 1973 had decreased to 45 percent and by 2000 to only 28 percent.

We chopped and fragmented whatever forest was left to make way for urbanization. We introduced exotic species and diseases, caused the loss and decline of many plant and animal species, and we landscaped with no halt. The result is the disturbed ecological balance in most of our ecosystems.

But we have also learned from our mistakes. There is a clear increase in environmental awareness, and concerns about the size and sustainability of natural ecosystems, urban forests and their ecological benefits. At CCNC, we take advantage of the wildlife-related educational possibilities we have, with our beautiful location within an urban forest. We pass on suggestions to our visitors and hope they will become our partners in the preservation of our biodiversity. For that, we recommend simple actions that include but are not limited to:

- Landscape for biodiversity: planting native trees and other plant species while reducing the impact of invasive species is of vital importance for the restoration of urban forests diversity. By using native plants in our landscape we provide wildlife with proper food and cover.
- Provide the birds that live near your home with proper food. The secret is to be consistent and use the right kind of food to keep them healthy. Once the birds find your feeder, you will experience one of the most

rewarding ways to attract and observe wildlife.

- Keep your cat indoors, away from your bird feeder. Cats are one of the main nest predators in woodlands near residential areas.
- Never take a wild animal from their forest habitat for a pet. Pet collection is the chief reason why box turtles are disappearing from the wild.
- You saw a snake? Just leave it alone. Maryland has 27 species of snakes, but only 2 of them are venomous. They will usually only challenge you if feeling threatened. Generalized fear of snakes sometimes causes harmless species to be killed. All snakes are in fact an extremely important part of the ecosystem
- Don't bring anything in; don't take anything out. What is a stick or a rock for you could be the home for a forest creature. A small non-native plant or animal brought out could turn into a deadly competitor or it could be carrying diseases that could affect native species.
- Do you walk your dog on a trail? Please, keep it on a leash to avoid interaction with wild animals.

Today we recognize that any conservation effort ultimately relies on broad-based public support. The problems causing forest destruction and the extinction of species are well known. What we have to do is to recognize the part we play in the ecosystem, and work together to find ethical solutions that will help us coexist with, but not defeat, biodiversity.

Did You Know...

Facts about Hibernation:

- Hibernation is a long winter's sleep in which an animal's body temperature, breathing and heart rate drop significantly and they do not rouse for many months.
- Animals hibernate for many reasons. Some animals like the groundhog hibernate because they do not have a food source in the winter, while others like reptiles and amphibians hibernate because they are exothermic or do not make their own body heat and could not survive winter's cold temperatures.
- Bears along with skunks, chipmunks and opossums are not true hibernators. They go into a light winter sleep called dormancy. While dormant, these animals use their body fat but their body temperature remains the same. They may even wake up in the winter to have a snack.

Party on the Wild Side!

Plan your child's next birthday party at Croydon Creek! Our nature parties are designed to educate and entertain with hands-on programs that highlight the wonders of nature. Choose from seven nature themes that vary depending on age. Whether you choose to meet our reptiles and amphibians up close or go on a geocaching adventure, Croydon Creek provides an exciting birthday experience! Call us or check our website for more information about themes and how to schedule!

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek
(240)314-8770

Download our party brochure for more info.

Croydon Creek Nature Center

852 Avery Road

Rockville, MD 20851

240-314-8770

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek

The Croydon Chronicle

Winter 2014 Classes



Bookworms (Adult/Child)

Curl up with a good book at the Nature Center. At each Bookworm program, we'll read a new story and you'll get a copy of the book to take home. Each program may include a craft or hike. Adult participant required.

Age: 2-5

Mitten

45101	Sa	1/11	10-10:45 AM	\$10/\$12
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Goodnight, Owl!

45102	Su	2/9	3:30-4:15 PM	\$10/\$12
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Possum and the Peeper

45103	Sa	3/1	10-10:45 AM	\$10/\$12
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Croydon Creek Campfire (Adult/Child)

Gather around the campfire with your friends for stories, snacks and more. An adult must accompany children and all participants must register. Bring a blanket or lawn chairs for seating.

All Ages

Spring Night Hike and Campfire

Enjoy a hike into the forest at dusk to look and listen for signs of spring. After the hike, we'll gather around the campfire to enjoy a campfire treat.

45117	Sa	3/29	7:30-8:30 PM	\$5/\$6
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Check our website
in March for the
pre-order form
for our
**Native Plant
Sale**

Croydon Creek Nature Center

852 Avery Rd, Rockville, MD, 20851

Phone

240-314-8770

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City of
Rockville
Get Into It

Hours of Operation

Tuesday through Saturday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

Closed Mondays

Winter 2014 Classes

Family Camp Day

Camp isn't just made for summer! Spend an afternoon with your child experiencing nature camp activities. Your winter camp day will include hands-on activities, games, crafts and a hike! Dress for the weather. All participants must register.

Age: 5+
45122 Su 1/26 1:30-3:30 PM \$5/\$7

Family Geocaching

Learn the history of geocaching and the basics of using our GPS units and then head out on our geocaching trail with your family to test your skills. This program will be partially self-guided. All participants must register.

All Ages
45419 Su 3/30 1:30-3 PM \$6/\$8

Nature Center Night Out

Enjoy an evening at the Nature Center participating in a variety of activities including a night hike followed by a campfire complete with campfire snacks. We will also learn about nocturnal animals through games, crafts and more!

Age: 7-12
45119 F 3/14 6:30-9:30 PM \$15/\$18



Nature Tots (Adult/Child)

Spend time with your child discovering the wonders of nature. A Naturalist will help you explore a new nature topic through nature play, crafts, stories and hikes. Dress for the weather. This program is intended to provide special one-on-one time for you and your child. Adult participation required.

Age: 2-5

Woodpeckers

45088 Th 1/9 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Bears

45089 Th 1/23 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

45090 Sa 1/25 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Animal Homes

45091 Th 2/6 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Nature's Champions

45092 Th 2/20 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

45093 Sa 2/22 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Deer

45094 Th 3/6 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

All About Bones

45095 Th 3/20 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

45096 Sa 3/22 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

SCOUT BADGE DAYS



WEBELOS
GEOLOGIST BADGE
Sunday, Feb. 2, 2-4 p.m.

JUNIOR GIRL SCOUTS
ANIMAL HABITATS
Sunday, March 2, 2-4 p.m.

Naturalists will help you complete the necessary requirements to achieve the badges.

All materials provided; however, badges are not supplied by the Nature Center. Programs held rain or shine. Dress for the weather.

Cost: \$14 residents; \$16 non-residents
For additional information or to register,
call Melinda Norton at 240-314-8771.

Visit <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/recreation/guide/> to register today!

Winter 2014 Classes



Saturday Story and Craft (Adult/Child)

Stop by the Nature Center on Saturday mornings for story time and a craft. A Naturalist will read a story and then lead a craft activity based on the theme of the story. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Age: 2-5

45104	Sa	1/18	10-10:45 AM	\$4/\$6
45105	Sa	2/15	10-10:45 AM	\$4/\$6

Saturday Story and Hike (Adult/Child)

Stop by the Nature Center for story time and a hike. Our Naturalist will read a story and lead a hike based on the story. Dress for the weather. Adult participation required.

Age: 2-5

45112	Sa	3/15	10-10:45 AM	\$4/\$6
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Star Party

Discover objects easily visible in the night sky, look through telescopes with an astronomer and enjoy a campfire treat. All participants must register.

Age: 5+

45115	Sa	3/8	6:30-7:30 PM	\$6/\$8
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Sunday Science Sampler

Enjoy an afternoon of learning with your child as you work your way through several self-guided stations designed to teach about nature in hands-on and unique ways. This program is presented open-house style so that everyone can work at their own pace. Plan to spend at least an hour.

Age: 2-6

45120	Su	2/2	2-4 PM	\$4/\$6
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Valentine Crafts

Craft some gifts for your Valentine at the Nature Center. We will use natural materials and recycled items to make at least three projects. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult. Register by: 1/29

Age: 5-12

45121	Sa	2/1	1:30-3 PM	\$10/\$12
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Winter Ramble - Family Hike

Join a Naturalist on a hike through the Hayes Forest Preserve. Enjoy the crisp air that winter brings as we hike the moderate trails. Our trails are not stroller friendly. All participants, including adults, must register. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

All Ages

45417	Su	3/2	1-2 PM	\$3/\$5
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2014 Summer Camps



Guppy Nature Camp

What's creeping, crawling and flapping your way? Guppy Nature Camp! Meet the critters that call Croydon Creek home and explore exciting natural history topics. Hands-on activities, experiments, hikes and crafts are all in a day's fun.

Age: 5-7

9 AM-3 PM

45971	6/23-6/27	\$203/\$240
45973	7/21-7/25	\$203/\$240
45974	8/11-8/15	\$203/\$240

9:30 AM-12 PM

45972	7/7-7/11	\$99/\$119
45975	8/18-8/22	\$99/\$119

Outdoor Expeditions

Get outdoors and discover local natural wonders with staff from Croydon Creek. Experience daily field trips where participants will explore the best nature spots in the area. All trips will be outside so dress for the weather and bring a lunch. Detailed information will be emailed three weeks prior to the start of camp.

Age: 9-12

9 AM-3 PM

45979	6/16-6/20	\$265/\$310
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Nature Explorations

Whether on land or in water, enjoy discovering nature. Topics may include geology, stream ecology, zoology and botany. Explore a variety of habitats through hands-on and minds-on activities, field studies and other experiments. Camp may include an off-site field trip.

Age: 7-10

9 AM-3 PM

45969	6/23-6/27	\$215/\$245
45970	7/21-7/25	\$215/\$245

Nature Service Learning Camp

Have fun at Croydon Creek while earning Student Service Learning (SSL) hours. Participants will investigate local environmental issues each morning. In the afternoon they will complete an eco-friendly volunteer project. Each person will receive 10 SSL hours total.

Age: 10-14

9 AM-3 PM

Soil Conservation

45977	7/14-7/16	\$120/\$140
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Water Conservation

45978	8/4-8/6	\$120/\$140
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American Indian Crafts and Culture

The culture of American Indians will come alive in this camp. Learn about various North American tribes from the Piscataway of the Mid-Atlantic to the Navajo of the Southwest. Discover how to preserve and conserve our natural resources through projects, games, crafts and activities inspired by American Indian traditions. This camp may include an off-site field trip.

Age: 8-12

9 AM-3 PM

45980	7/28-8/1	\$219/\$249
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Wilderness Skills

Are you a fan of Bear Grylls or Survivorman? Are you amazed by their abilities to survive in the wilderness with just the bare necessities? Participants won't be eating any grubs or road kill but they will learn basic outdoor skills, from campfire cooking to primitive shelter construction, as well as plant and wildlife identification. Camp may include an off-site field trip.

Age: 9-12

9 AM-3 PM

45976	8/11-15	\$225/\$250
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